

NSC BRIEFING

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DECLASSIFIED
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EXEMPT FROM DATE
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EAST GERMAN SITUATION

- I. Detention of American congressmen probably first of series of new Communist harassments designed to force Western recognition of East Germany and its authority over East Berlin.
 - A. Since incident East German press has emphasized East German sovereignty and authority over East Berlin.
 - B. Soviet Commandant in Berlin, General Dibrova claims that East Germany has authority in East Berlin and not Soviet Union.
- II. GDR will try to make Allied visitors to East Berlin subject to East German laws.
 - A. Western acceptance would imply recognition of East German authority over Soviet sector.
- III. East Germans on 2 December claimed jurisdiction extends to GDR operated elevated rail system in West Berlin.
 - A. Will probably press for jurisdiction over elevated stations in West Berlin, but probably no immediate intention of severing elevated service between East and West Berlin.
 1. There is at present no alternative means of transport to substitute for elevated service

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connecting East Berlin and several East German cities.

IV. East Germans now demanding West Germany discuss on ministerial level barge traffic to Berlin.

- A. Barge traffic may be interfered with, and possibly stopped, at end of year unless Bonn agrees to ministerial negotiations.
 - 1. West can retaliate against substantial freight movements by barge from Hamburg to East Germany.
- B. In 1954 barges carried 23 percent of all freight to Berlin and 18 percent of that from Berlin.
 - 1. During the first half of 1955 the percentage carried by barges decreased slightly.
 - 2. If barge traffic stopped, 60 percent of normal barge cargoes which carry primarily coal and other industrial materials, could be diverted to unused rail capacity.
 - a. However, existing truck capacity could probably not be diverted.
- C. West Berlin has large stockpiles on hand, including coal and food staples.
 - 1. Welfare of Berlin people, therefore, would not be seriously threatened unless all transport stopped at once.
 - a. Recent unconfirmed reports suggest that

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East Germany will place tolls on Western aircraft using the air corridors to Berlin.

(1) This is not, however, considered likely because Soviet Union would not be willing to accept risk of serious incident.

b. There will probably not be full blockade in near future since USSR realizes West would take strong countermeasures, i.e., airlift.

V. East Germany announced on 5 December compulsory East German insurance for all Western vehicles driven in East Germany.

A. This law will probably include East Berlin, though announcement did not specifically refer to East Berlin.

B. Based on September law which becomes effective 1 January 1956.

1. Gives East Germany power to collect exorbitant insurance fees.

VI. Further harassment could include restrictions on movements of Berliners between East and West Berlin.

A. Various restrictions on West German access to Berlin through East Germany also probable, e.g., trucking, other vehicles and movement of people.

VII. Visit of Premier Grotewohl and high-level delegation to

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- A. This development alone not indicative of any intention to refrain from harassing West for time being.
- B. Purpose of Chinese trip probably to enhance international prestige of East Germany and perhaps to sign friendship treaty.

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